

## **What Every TABE Administrator Should Know About Reasonable Accommodation for Students with Disabilities**

### **Documentation of Disability**

In order for any student to receive reasonable accommodation, inclusive of testing accommodations, the individual must demonstrate that s/he is a qualified person with a disability unless the disability is obvious (e.g. person who is blind, deaf, etc.). It is key to remember that the identification of necessary accommodations and/or adaptations is made to assist an individual with a disability overcome or work around barriers of a functional limitation imposed by the disability.

The documentation should either show

- a history of previous testing accommodations
- recommendations for the use of testing accommodations
- or information that reasonably identifies barriers related to the disability that would suggest the need for testing accommodations (e.g. processing disorder, slower processing speed, fine motor difficulties, distractibility concerns, etc.).

Typical sources for documentation of disability and/or need for testing accommodations include\*

- Individualized Education Plan (IEP)
- 504 Plan (public schools, accommodations but no special education services)
- Psycho-educational reports
- Psychological assessments
- Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Assessments
- Medical Reports (Information has to support the need for accommodations related to testing. For example, perhaps the individual's disability requires the use of a particular type of medication that causes the mouth to be excessively dry. That individual may need to have something to drink in the testing area if that is not typically allowed.)

\*\*\*This list is not all inclusive.

In circumstances when there is not enough time to acquire the required documentation as per the Reasonable Accommodations Guidelines, the disability coordinator may

assist the student by obtaining verbal confirmation from a qualified professional\* with hard copy documentation forthcoming.\*\* This conversation must be recorded on the request for accommodations form including the name of the professional, his or her title, the type of documentation forthcoming, the agency or organization he/she represents, and the date of the conversation.

If the documentation is not readily forthcoming, the center should make further efforts to contact the organization or entity that provided the verbal confirmation to secure the necessary documentation. If center staff is unable to secure hard copy documentation, the verbal confirmation expires by the next TABE test (e.g. 90 days). Centers are also encouraged to have the applicant/student assessed locally for documentation of a disability if the center has resources to do so. [Please visit the Job Corps Disability website: [http://jcdisability.jobcorps.gov/html/ra\\_jc.htm](http://jcdisability.jobcorps.gov/html/ra_jc.htm) and scroll down to the section on "Applicant/Student without Documentation."]

To obtain or release any information regarding a student's disability, it is required that the student provide written consent, and if a minor, the consent of a guardian as well.

*\*The appropriate professional in any particular situation will depend on the disability and the type of functional limitation it imposes. Appropriate professionals include, but are not limited to, doctors (including psychiatrists), psychologists, nurses, physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech therapists, vocational rehabilitation specialists, and licensed mental health professionals.*

*In requesting documentation, centers should specify what types of information they are seeking regarding the disability, its functional limitations, and the need for reasonable accommodation. The center must maintain the confidentiality of all medical information collected during this process, regardless of where the information comes from.*

*\*\*If calling a public school or like entity, the information may be obtained from a school's registrar or records personnel who is providing the information from the applicant/student's IEP on file with them.*

*\*\*\*TABE test results and other general academic assessments used in the Job Corps program are not acceptable forms of documentation for substantiating that a student is a qualified individual with a disability.*

## **Testing Accommodations**

Certainly, the most commonly used accommodation in the testing environment is "extended" time (e.g. time and a half, double-time, unlimited time). There are, however, many other types of accommodations that may apply to the testing environment. These accommodations generally fall into the following categories: changes to the methods of presentation of the test (e.g. oral reading of test directions); changes to the methods of response to the test (e.g. use of paper/pencil test and answer sheet); test setting (e.g.,

taking the test in small rather than large groups); and test timing (e.g., extension of time to take a test).

Accommodations provided in the testing environment should already be in use in the learning environment with the exception of the administration of the first TABE test which takes place within 21 days of the student's arrival on center. The actual use of the accommodation in the learning environment allows the student to become accustomed to the use of the accommodation and also allows the staff and the student to determine the appropriateness and the effectiveness of the accommodations being used.

CTB McGraw-Hill's "Guidelines for Inclusive Test Administration: 2005" contains extensive information on the types of testing accommodations that can be provided. A link to this information may be found on the Job Corps Disability Website.

[http://jcdisability.jobcorps.gov/html/ra\\_testing.htm](http://jcdisability.jobcorps.gov/html/ra_testing.htm)

[Scroll down to the "TABE Testing Accommodations" section]

### **Exceptions to the use of Student Testing System**

The use of paper/pencil tests is prohibited unless authorized by the Job Corps Data Center to provide reasonable accommodation to any student with documented cognitive or physical disability that prevents the student from taking the TABE online.

Examples of possible accommodation considerations in relation to a specific functional limitation:

| <b>Functional Limitation</b>   | <b>Accommodation Consideration</b>   |
|--|--|
| Student has the type of seizure disorder that is triggered by exposure to the flickering of a computer monitor screen due to photosensitivity. | Possibly needs to use a particular type of computer monitor or the use of a paper/pencil version of tests. (Consult with physician about possible accommodations for photosensitivity concerns for people with a seizure disorder) |
| Student "sees" floating text when looking at print or has other visual limitations involving reading print/text materials.                     | Possibly needs use of color overlays; auditory access to information; use of graph paper for computational work; use of line guides for tracking test; use of Braille or large print materials, etc.                               |
| Student is highly distractible.  | Possible need for use of private testing area.   |

Please refer to the TABE 9/10 Student Testing System (STS) Administrator's Guide for additional guidelines and procedures to follow in these instances.

## **Accommodation Plan - CIS**

Each student with a qualified disability receiving reasonable accommodation including testing accommodations must have a written plan that details the accommodations agreed to during the interactive reasonable accommodation process. Although the plan may be written and maintained via a paper version, the suggested best practice is to enter the accommodations in the accommodation screen in CIS.

The center's disability coordinator must ensure

- that all staff with a need to know have access to the student's accommodation information, and
- that a process is implemented for notifying staff with a need to know of the existence of an accommodation plan.

Note: If there is a need for an alternate form of testing, i.e. paper/pencil vs. using STS, this information should be documented in the accommodation plan.

## **Sharing Accommodation Information**

Accommodation plans should not include information about an individual student's diagnosis, medication needs, or other health related history or information. Accommodations are adaptations or modifications that allow the individual to "work around" or that remove barriers to some functional limitation imposed by the disability. This information must be shared with all staff that has a "need to know."

The determination of which staff has a "need to know" must be done on a case-by-case basis. It is essential that staff have access to this information if the student will need an accommodation in that staff's area of responsibility. For example, testing administrators need access to the accommodation plan if there are testing accommodations to be provided. All staff may need access to the plan if the student has a severe reading disability that will impact him/her in all areas of the center.

## **Implementation of Accommodations**

In addition to ensuring that all staff with a "need to know" are informed about and have access to a student's accommodation plan, the center's staff must also be able to demonstrate that accommodations have been implemented and provided as indicated on the accommodation plan.

Implementation of TABE testing accommodations may be verified by:

- listing the accommodations provided on the TABE test ticket and having the student sign it. This test ticket is then filed in the student's central file.

- adding updates of accommodations provided in the accommodation screen of CIS.
- maintaining a testing accommodation log that includes the student name, accommodations needed, and dates provided.

Generally speaking, the effectiveness of a student's accommodation should be evaluated on a regular basis throughout his/her enrollment in Job Corps (within 30 days of the implementation of the accommodation and at least every 60 days thereafter). The student's counselor and managers in areas where the student is receiving accommodation should provide follow up information to the DC.

Counselors should ask students with accommodation plans specifically about the effectiveness of their accommodation plans during regularly scheduled meetings with the student. This information should be passed on to the DC to update the student's accommodation plan. If a student's accommodation plan does not seem to be effective, the student will be scheduled to participate in the next IDT meeting or meet with the DC and appropriate staff to update the plan.

Managers in areas where the student is receiving accommodation should receive regular updates from staff on the progress of each student with an accommodation plan. This information should be shared with the DC during IDT meetings.

Sample forms for monitoring and tracking the implementation and effectiveness of accommodation may be found on the Job Corps Disability website.

[http://jcdisability.jobcorps.gov/html/ra\\_jc.htm](http://jcdisability.jobcorps.gov/html/ra_jc.htm)

[Scroll down to Record Keeping]

### **Staff Resources**

Job Corps Disability Site - <http://jcdisability.jobcorps.gov>

Job Corps Learning Disability Site - <http://jccdrcl.jobcorps.gov/ld>